REMARKS

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fusz in view of Axaopoulos. However, neither of these references suggest a system in which a privacy agent maintains transactional anonymity between verified users by interfering temporarily with transmission of a message containing information regarding an actual identity of the verified user sending the message until that user either removes the information or authorizes its transmission as part of the message, as required by independent claims 1, 8 and 12.

Independent claim 1 recites a privacy agent that maintains "transactional anonymity between the verified users on the web servers by interfering temporarily with transmission of a message containing information regarding an actual identity of the verified user sending the message until that user either removes the information or authorizes its transmission as part of the message." In contrast, Fusz describes a system which allows for a consumer to provide anonymous marketing data to a system. While Fusz teaches a method that keeps a user's personal information anonymous, it does not teach interfering temporarily with the transmission of a message containing information regarding an actual identity of the verified user sending the message until that user either removes the information or authorizes its transmission as part of the message." For example, Fusz operates to ensure that identifying information is not provided to the system by formatting the questionnaire provided to the consumer such that answers may only be provided in multiple choice format, true/false selections, or pull-down messages/menus, thus preventing consumers from inadvertently providing identifying information. (Paragraph 0031). Thus, Fusz does not teach the above limitation of independent claim 1. The Office Action concedes this point, stating that Fusz fails to disclose the limitation involving "temporarily [interfering with the] transmission of a message containing information regarding an actual identity of the verified user sending the message." The Office Action relies on Axaopoulos to teach this limitation, stating that Axaopoulos teaches "a user that can purchase products at another web site using a navigation agent's identity, a unique identity corresponding to that user in the market place program, or a temporary identity for the user without the supplier knowing

the identity of the user." (See abstract, col. 17, lines 4-15). As pointed out in Applicant's Appeal Brief, filed on November 12, 2004, Axaopoulos does not suggest a privacy agent that maintains transactional anonymity between verified users by "interfering temporarily with transmission of a message containing information regarding an actual identity of the verified user sending the message until that user either removes the information or authorizes its transmission as part of the message." The portion of Axaopoulos cited by the Office Action teaches a third party privacy system in which products are sent to a user without the supplier knowing the identity of the user. It does NOT teach interfering temporarily with the transmission of a message containing information regarding an actual identity of the verified user sending the message until that user either removes the information or authorizes its transmission as part of the message. Since this is a required feature of independent claim 1 and is not suggested or taught by any of the cited references, independent claim 1 is allowable.

Similarly, independent claims 8 and 12 recite methods which include interfering temporarily with transmission of a message containing information regarding an actual identity of the verified user sending the message until that user either removes the information or authorizes its transmission as part of the message. As described above, this required feature of the claims is not disclosed in any of the cited references. Therefore, independent claims 8 and 12 are allowable.

Furthermore, dependent claims 2-7, 9-11, and 13-20 all depend from one of allowable independent claims 1, 8, or 12 and are also allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, this application containing pending claims 1-20 is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 and 1.17 and credit any over payments to Deposit Account No. 11-0982. Deposit Account Name: Kinney & Lange, P.A. A duplicate copy of this communication is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

KINNEY & LANGE, P.A.

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